

Remarks by Glenn N. Slack
Public Meeting on Privatization of Animal Movement Tracking Database
October 12, 2005; Kansas City, Missouri

Good Morning. My name is Glenn Slack and I serve as president and chief executive officer of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture.

I would like to provide you with some results of a survey we conducted on the heels of ID/INFO EXPO 2005, hosted by NIAA only two weeks ago.

The survey was administered electronically to both NIAA members as well as individuals who attended ID/INFO EXPO, comprising a total survey pool of 891. Of this number, NIAA received 198 responses, for a 22 percent response rate.

I will submit the results for all 23 questions in my written comments to the agency, but today I will focus on a couple of questions that are pertinent to today's gathering. In addition to the survey results, I will be submitting a list of over 100 questions to the agency that were posed by individual EXPO attendees on topics related to privatizing of the database and other related issues. I urge the agency to consider these questions as representative of the industry at-large and, as such, provide substantive answers and disseminate throughout the industry and through the trade media.

Now, returning to the survey, I would like to highlight information learned from the following selected questions of particular interest to today's hearing:

Question 12: Which do you support regarding a voluntary or mandatory animal identification program? Ninety percent (90%) of respondents support a program that is either mandatory from the outset, mandatory as soon as possible following developmental stages, or mandatory by 2009. Only seven percent (7%) support a completely voluntary program.

Question 15: The aggressiveness of the timeline at which USDA is pursuing NAIS implementation. Forty-eight percent (48%) of respondents indicated that USDA is pursuing NAIS implementation in an adequately aggressive manner. Forty percent (40%) indicated a somewhat or very unaggressive timeline and only 12 percent indicated a highly or too aggressive timeline.

Question 16: USDA recently announced they are charging private industry to develop a consortium to manage a central, privatized animal tracking database. Do you agree this is the appropriate course of action at this time? Fifty-six percent (56%) of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with this course of action, while twenty-five percent (25%) agree or strongly agree. Eighteen percent (18%) of respondents were unsure or had no opinion.

Question 17: USDA has scheduled a stakeholders meeting for Oct. 12 to allow industry to step into the role of developing a private tracking database.

Which approach do you feel will best allow industry stakeholders to move forward in a timely manner?

- Twelve percent (12%) of respondents favor adopting the current consortium concept being proposed by NCBA.
- Another twelve percent (12%) of respondents want to sit and wait, hoping that USDA will resume responsibility for the database.
- Thirteen percent (13%) prefer to allow each species to pursue a private tracking system
- Fourteen percent (14%) want to start from scratch on an industry initiative, and rely on all stakeholders to participate in reaching an effective solution.
- Forty percent (40%) would like to see an approach similar to the 2002 National Animal ID Task Force to coordinate a consortium that will develop an effective solution.
- Ten percent (10%) had no opinion or were unsure.

Question 18: What sector do you feel should bear the greatest cost of implementation of the entire national animal identification system, including premises registration, AIN management and animal tracking? Fifty-seven percent (57%) believe the federal government should bear the greatest cost of a national animal identification system, with another potential subset (16%), who believe consumers should bear the greatest cost. Only fourteen percent (14%) of respondents feel that producers should bear the greatest cost.

Question 19: The means for protecting confidentiality of data has been highly contentious among various industry stakeholders, particularly since the announcement of a private tracking database. Do you agree/disagree that legislation is necessary in order to protect data, as animal health officials are expected to have 24/7 access to the data? Eighty-two percent (82%) of respondents either agree or strongly agree that legislation will be necessary in order to protect data. Eleven percent (11%) either disagree or strongly disagree that legislation will be necessary.

Complete results for each of the 23 questions in the survey are available to all on the Internet at <http://www.animalagriculture.org/id/2005Survey.asp>. Further extrapolations can be performed as necessary.

As mentioned earlier in my remarks, I am also attaching a list of questions posed by ID/INFO EXPO 2005 participants. While some were adequately addressed by speakers and panelists, others remained unanswered. Industry and government stakeholders attending this symposium comprise a microcosm for the industry at-large. As such, these questions are believed to be representative of producers and other stakeholders across the nation. It is our hope that USDA will be attentive to this list and seek to provide and effectively communicate answers where possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these remarks.

Glenn N. Slack
President & Chief Executive Officer
National Institute for Animal Agriculture
1910 Lyda Avenue
Bowling Green, KY 42104-5809
Telephone: 270/782-9798
Fax: 270/782-0188
Email: gslack@animalagriculture.org
Website: www.animalagriculture.org